

## The Prevalence of Cyberbullying Perpetration and Victimization among Undergraduate English Major Students

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### Abstract

Cyberbullying has emerged as a significant issue in Thailand, with several studies reporting high rates of cyberbullying victimization and perpetration among university students. However, research investigating the prevalence of cyberbullying within specific academic departments or disciplines is limited. This study aimed to address this gap by examining the prevalence of cyberbullying among undergraduate English major students, while also identifying the factors contributing to cyberbullying. Using a mixed-method approach, a survey research design was adopted, with 51 English major students from a private university randomly selected as participants. Quantitative data was collected using a close-ended questionnaire, while qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews. Results revealed that the majority of participants had not engaged in cyberbullying, either as perpetrators or victims. However, 9.80% of participants admitted to bullying others, while 7.84% reported being bullied on social media. Understanding and perception of cyberbullying varied among participants, with some unaware that they had been involved in certain types of cyberbullying. The most common forms of cyberbullying reported were posting rude comments, spreading false information online, and making fun of others' English accents. Gender differences were also found to play a significant role in cyberbullying perpetration and victimization, with females more likely to be bullied online and LGBTQ individuals being more susceptible to being targeted. The findings contribute to the understanding of cyberbullying among English major students and emphasize the importance of educating students about cyberbullying and its various forms and promoting healthy online behavior to mitigate the harmful effects of cyberbullying.

**Keywords :** Cyberbullying, Prevalence, Causal Factors, English major Students

### 1. Introduction

Cyberbullying is a worldwide problem that has garnered attention from researchers, policymakers, and the public. According to a global study conducted by UNESCO, approximately one-third of students aged 13 to 15 have experienced bullying, either in person or online (UNESCO, 2018). Moreover, research shows that cyberbullying is not limited to a particular region or culture but is a global phenomenon that affects young people worldwide (Kowalski et al., 2014). For instance, a study conducted in Nigeria found that approximately 42% of secondary school students had experienced cyberbullying (Olawoyin et al., 2016). Similarly, in China, research has shown that cyberbullying is prevalent among Chinese adolescents, with approximately 23% reporting having been victimized (Li et al., 2019). In another study conducted in Korea, cyberbullying victimization rates were found to be around 20% (Hong and Espelage, 2012). Furthermore, in the United States, research indicates that approximately 37% of students aged 12 to 18 have experienced cyberbullying (Bauman et al.,

2013). Additionally, studies conducted in Europe have found that cyberbullying is a prevalent problem, with victimization rates ranging from 4.4% to 34.4% depending on the country (Smith et al., 2008; Erdur-Baker, 2010; Baldry et al., 2015).

Cyberbullying is also a significant problem in Thailand, with studies reporting high rates of cyberbullying perpetration and victimization among Thai youth. According to a study by Saengcharoensap and Rujiprak (2021), 12.5% of Thai university students had engaged in cyberbullying, while 23.3% had been victimized. The most common forms of cyberbullying reported were name-calling, spreading rumors, and exclusion from online groups. Another study by Samoh et al. (2019) surveying Thai university students also found that 44.4% had experienced cyberbullying at some point, with the most common types being insults, rumors, and threats. The study also found that students who had experienced cyberbullying were more likely to report symptoms of depression and anxiety. Furthermore, Saengcharoensap et al. (2019) found that cyberbullying victimization was associated with lower academic performance and lower levels of self-esteem among Thai university students. The study also found that students who had experienced cyberbullying were more likely to engage in risky behaviors such as substance use. The prevalence of cyberbullying among university students is concerning because it can have serious negative consequences for victims, such as depression, anxiety, and social isolation (Kowalski et al., 2012; Hinduja and Patchin, 2015). Furthermore, cyberbullying can also lead to academic problems, such as decreased motivation and lower academic performance (Beran and Li, 2005).

While there are many studies exploring the prevalence of cyberbullying among university students, most of these studies have been done with university students in general. There is a lack of studies examining the prevalence of cyberbullying within specific academic departments or disciplines. Also, few studies have examined whether certain departments or majors may be more susceptible to cyberbullying or experience different types of cyberbullying. Thus, this study aims to examine the prevalence of cyberbullying perpetration and victimization among undergraduate English major students, as well as to identify the factors that contribute to cyberbullying among this population. The researchers hope that the results of this study will help understand the types of cyberbullying experienced by English major students, which then can inform the development of discipline-specific prevention and intervention strategies. Moreover, identifying the factors that contribute to cyberbullying in specific academic contexts can inform the development of policies and practices to prevent and respond to cyberbullying in higher education institutions.

## 2. Literature Review

### *Definition of cyberbullying*

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2020), cyberbullying is defined as "bullying that takes place on digital devices. It can happen through SMS, text messages, apps, or online on social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. It includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior."

Schultze-Krumbholz and Scheithauer (2013) define cyberbullying as "repeated aggressive acts that are intentional and involve the use of modern communication media to intentionally harm others who are less powerful than the perpetrator."

Patchin and Hinduja (2015) describe cyberbullying as "a new form of unwanted aggressive behavior that has emerged in recent years through technological devices, primarily smartphones and the internet. It involves the use of digital communication tools to intentionally inflict harm or distress on others."

To conclude, while these definitions may differ in their wording and emphasis, they share these core elements, providing a common understanding of cyberbullying as a form of intentional and repeated aggression using digital communication tools to harm others who are in a less powerful position.

### ***Factors contributing to cyberbullying***

Cyberbullying is a complex phenomenon that has been examined through different theoretical frameworks. Two commonly utilized frameworks are the social cognitive theory and the social-ecological model.

First, the social cognitive theory, proposed by Bandura (1977), focuses on how individuals learn and develop behaviors through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. In the context of cyberbullying, this theory suggests that individuals may engage in cyberbullying behavior if they have witnessed or experienced it before, perceive it as effective, and receive positive reinforcement for their actions.

The social-ecological model is another framework that can be used to understand cyberbullying. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the model emphasizes the multiple levels of influence on individuals' behaviors, including intrapersonal, interpersonal, institutional, community, and societal factors. It suggests that cyberbullying is influenced by a combination of individual characteristics, relationships with peers and family, school and community environments, and broader cultural norms and values.

To sum up, these frameworks provide valuable insights into the factors contributing to cyberbullying, addressing both cognitive and contextual influences.

### **3. Objectives**

This study aims to examine the prevalence of cyberbullying perpetration and victimization among undergraduate English major students, as well as to identify the factors that contribute to cyberbullying among this population. The study is guided by two research questions:

1. What is the prevalence of cyberbullying perpetration and victimization among undergraduate English major students?
2. What factors contribute to cyberbullying perpetration and victimization among undergraduate English major students?

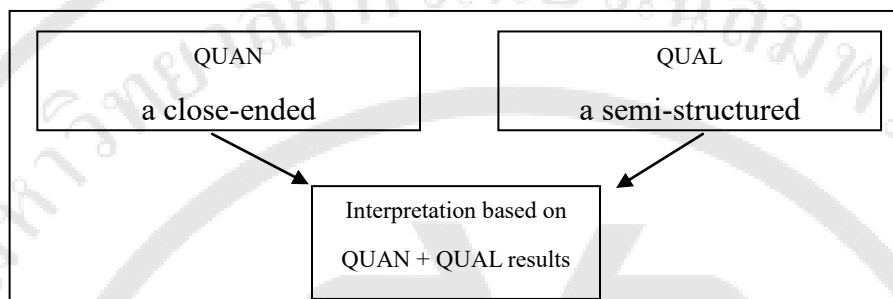
### **4. Materials and methods**

This study adopted a survey research design to investigate both the prevalence and causal factors of cyberbullying perpetration and victimization among undergraduate English major students.

The population of the study was 170 students who were studying English program, at the Faculty of Liberal Arts, at a private university in Samutprakarn. 51 students, including first-year students to fourth-year students, were randomly selected to be the participants in the study.

The data collection and analysis process utilized a mixed methods approach with a concurrent triangulation design, as illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1:** Research Design



For the quantitative part, the data were collected through a close-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire, which was adapted from Saengcharoensap and Rujiprak (2021) and Hinduja and Patchin (2021), included 4 parts as follows:

- Part 1: Personal Information of the Participants
- Part 2: Cyberbullying Perpetration, comprising 10 questions
- Part 3: Cyberbullying Victimization, comprising 10 questions
- Part 4: Factors Contributing to Cyberbullying Perpetration and Victimization, comprising 6 questions
- Part 5: Additional Comments

For the qualitative part, the semi-structured interview was adopted to collect the data. 15 out of 51 participants were randomly selected. These 15 students were asked for their experiences and opinions toward cyberbullying.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics: frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation (SD), while data obtained from the interviews were transcribed and analyzed qualitatively.

## 5. Results

### 5.1 Demographic information of the participants

The personal information of the participants including their genders and years of studying in the program is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Demographic information of the participants

Year of Study	Participants		Male		Female	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1 <sup>st</sup> Year	12	23.53	4	7.84	8	15.69
2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	12	23.53	5	9.80	7	13.73

Year of Study	Participants		Male		Female	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	12	23.53	4	7.84	8	15.69
4 <sup>th</sup> Year	15	29.41	7	13.73	8	15.69
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>39.22</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>60.78</b>

Table 1 illustrates that the largest proportion of participants (29.41%) were fourth-year students, while the percentages of first, second, and third-year students were equal at 23.53% each. In terms of gender, 60.78% of the participants identified as female, while 39.22% identified as male.

## 5.2 The prevalence of cyberbullying perpetration and victimization among undergraduate English major students

In order to answer Research Question 1: *What is the prevalence of cyberbullying perpetration and victimization among undergraduate English major students*, the data collected from the closed-ended questionnaire and the semi-structured interview were analyzed. The findings are presented according to the following topics.

### 5.2.1 Quantitative findings from the closed-ended questionnaire

#### 5.2.1.1 Prevalence of cyberbullying perpetration among undergraduate English major students

Table 2 presents the results obtained from the closed-ended questionnaire regarding cyberbullying perpetration. The data indicate that a vast majority of participants (90.20%) reported that they had never engaged in cyberbullying on social media. Only five participants (9.80%) admitted to being involved in cyberbullying. Among these participants, four reported that they had bullied others online 1-2 times, while one participant admitted to doing so 3-4 times.

**Table 2** The number and percentage of cyberbullying perpetration among undergraduate English major students

Cyberbullying perpetration	Gender	N	Never	1-2 times	3-4 times	5-6 times	> 6 times
			N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Having bullied others on a social media platform.	Male	20	17 (33.33)	2 (3.92)	1 (1.96)	0	0
	Female	31	29 (56.86)	2 (3.92)	0	0	0
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>46 (90.20)</b>	<b>4 (7.84)</b>	<b>1 (1.96)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Table 3 displays the mean cyberbullying perpetration scores of the participants, indicating how often they engaged in cyberbullying behavior as perpetrators. The data shows that, on average, the participants never engaged in cyberbullying behavior ( $x = 1.32$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ ). Moreover, the table provides information on the various types of cyberbullying perpetration, with mean scores for each type ranging from 1.09 to 1.62. The highest mean score is for saying something rude to someone on a social media platform ( $x = 1.62$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ), followed by

posting fake news about others on a social media platform ( $x = 1.43$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ). The lowest mean score, on the other hand, is posting someone's secret things, photos, or videos without his/her permission on a social media platform ( $x = 1.14$ ,  $SD = 0.35$ ).

Furthermore, Table 3 presents a comparison of mean scores between male and female participants. The table shows that the mean cyberbullying perpetration scores for male and female participants are equal, at 1.32 ( $SD = 0.31$  and  $0.53$ , respectively). This finding indicates that both male and female participants had never bullied others online. However, both male and female participants admitted that they had engaged in the behavior of saying something rude to someone on a social media platform the most, with mean scores of 1.55 ( $SD = 0.69$ ) and 1.68 ( $SD = 0.78$ ), respectively.

The table also shows that male participants were least involved in making fun of someone's English accent on a social media platform ( $x = 1.15$ ,  $SD = 0.29$ ), while female participants were least involved in posting someone's secret things, photos, or videos without his/her permission on a social media platform ( $x = 1.09$ ,  $SD = 0.37$ ).

**Table 3** The mean scores of cyberbullying perpetration among undergraduate English major students

Cyberbullying perpetration	Male			Female			TOTAL		
	SD	Meaning		SD	Meaning		SD	Meaning	
1. I made fun of someone's English accent on a social media platform.	1.15	0.37	Never	1.18	0.39	Never	1.17	0.38	Never
2. I posted mean or hurtful comments about someone's poor English skills on a social media platform.	1.20	0.41	Never	1.27	0.46	Never	1.24	0.43	Never
3. I posted mean or hurtful comments about someone's physical appearance on a social media platform.	1.40	0.68	Never	1.41	0.59	Never	1.40	0.63	Never
4. I criticized others harshly on a social media platform.	1.40	0.50	Never	1.27	0.46	Never	1.33	0.48	Never
5. I said something rude to someone on a social media platform.	1.55	0.69	1-2 times	1.68	0.78	1-2 times	1.62	0.73	1-2 times
7. I intentionally blocked or deleted someone from their social media platform.	1.20	0.41	Never	1.41	0.50	Never	1.31	0.47	Never
8. I posted someone's secret things, photos, or videos without his/her permission on a social media platform.	1.20	0.41	Never	1.09	0.29	Never	1.14	0.35	Never
9. I posted fake news about others on a social media platform.	1.45	0.69	Never	1.41	0.59	Never	1.43	0.63	Never
<b>Overall</b>	<b>1.32</b>	<b>0.31</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>1.32</b>	<b>0.53</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>1.32</b>	<b>0.50</b>	<b>Never</b>

### 5.2.1.2 Prevalence of cyberbullying victimization among undergraduate English major students

Table 4 displays the results obtained from the closed-ended questionnaire on cyberbullying victimization. The data indicate that most participants (92.16%) reported that they had never been bullied online. Only four participants (7.84%) reported being bullied 1-2 times.

**Table 4** The number and percentage of cyberbullying victimization among undergraduate English major students

Cyberbullying perpetration	Gender	N	Never	1-2 times	3-4 times	5-6 times	> 6 times
			N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Having been bullied on a social media platform.	Male	20	18 (35.29)	2 (3.92)	0	0	0
	Female	31	29 (56.86)	2 (3.92)	0	0	0
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>47 (92.16)</b>	<b>4 (7.84)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Table 5** The mean scores of cyberbullying victimization among undergraduate English major students

Cyberbullying perpetration	Male		Female		TOTAL				
	SD	Meaning	SD	Meaning	SD	Meaning			
1. Someone made fun of my English accent on a social media platform.	1.35	0.49	Never	1.27	0.70	Never	1.31	0.60	Never
2. Someone posted mean or hurtful comments about my poor English skills on a social media platform.	1.50	0.61	1-2 times	1.55	0.74	1-2 times	1.50	0.67	1-2 times
3. Someone posted mean or hurtful comments about my physical appearance on a social media platform.	1.40	0.73	Never	1.55	0.74	1-2 times	1.48	0.74	1-2 times
4. Someone criticized me harshly on a social media platform.	1.40	0.75	Never	1.27	0.70	Never	1.33	0.72	Never
5. Someone said something rude to me on a social media platform.	1.80	0.70	1-2 times	1.77	0.87	1-2 times	1.80	0.78	1-2 times
7. Someone intentionally blocked or deleted me from a social media platform.	1.15	0.48	Never	1.55	0.74	1-2 times	1.36	0.66	Never
8. Someone posted my secret things, photos, or videos without my permission on a social media platform.	1.20	0.51	Never	1.23	0.69	Never	1.21	0.61	Never
9. Someone posted fake news about me on a social media platform.	1.55	0.69	1-2 times	1.59	0.85	1-2 times	1.57	0.77	1-2 times

Cyberbullying perpetration	Male		Female		TOTAL				
	SD	Meaning	SD	Meaning	SD	Meaning			
<b>Overall</b>	1.39	0.11	Never	1.43	0.76	Never	1.32	0.50	Never

Table 5 presents the mean scores of cyberbullying victimization experienced by the participants, which indicates how often they had been bullied on social media. The data reveals that, on average, the participants had never been bullied online ( $x = 1.32$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ ).

The mean scores for each type range from 1.21 to 1.80. The highest mean score is for being subjected to rude comments on a social media platform ( $x = 1.80$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ), followed by being posted fake news about oneself on a social media platform ( $x = 1.57$ ,  $SD = 0.77$ ). The lowest mean score, on the other hand, is for having one's private information, photos, or videos posted without their consent on a social media platform ( $x = 1.21$ ,  $SD = 0.61$ ).

Table 5 also presents a comparison of mean scores between male and female participants. It is evident that the mean cyberbullying victimization score for female participants is 1.43 ( $SD = 0.76$ ) while the mean score for male participants is 1.39 ( $SD = 0.11$ ). This finding suggests that cyberbullying victimization is more prevalent among females.

It can also be seen that both male and female participants reported being subjected to rude comments online 1-2 times, with mean scores of 1.80 ( $SD = 0.70$ ) and 1.77 ( $SD = 0.87$ ), respectively. The type of cyberbullying victimization that male and female participants reported being least involved in is having their private information, photos, or videos shared online without their consent, with mean scores of 1.20 ( $SD = 0.51$ ) and 1.23 ( $SD = 0.69$ ), respectively.

### 5.2.2 Qualitative findings from the semi-structured interview

The participants were asked about their experiences with cyberbullying. The findings revealed that some participants had been involved in cyberbullying both as a bully and as a victim. However, it seems that most participants were not aware that they had engaged in some kind of cyberbullying.

The details are presented according to the following topics:

#### 5.2.2.1 Perception of cyberbullying among the participants

Most participants believed that cyberbullying involved an intentional act that caused serious harm or damage to a person's reputation.

*“Actually, when talking about cyberbullying I feel that it should be something more serious, like aggressively fighting with each other on social media... something that causes harm in real life...I just don't think that making fun of my friends is also counted as cyberbullying...” S.4*

*“I just don't think that what I did, like posting my friend's funny photo on Facebook is cyberbullying... in my opinion, cyberbullying should be something more hurtful.....” S. 2*



They also considered the relationship between the individuals involved as an essential factor in determining whether an action was classified as cyberbullying or just harmless joking. The participants were less likely to perceive close friends as cyber bullies.

*“My friend took photos of me sleeping and posted them on Instagram.... They painted my face with lipstick, but I was not angry at them... I think they were just having fun...making me laugh...”* S. 3

#### **5.2.2.2 Types of cyberbullying experienced by the participants**

Some participants said that they had been involved in making fun of others or insulting someone on social media.

*“I used to mock my friend’s funny English accent, but I did not mean to hurt her, just having fun with her...”* S.2

*“I used to tell someone off in the LINE group because she did to me first...”*  
S.3

Besides, some participants reported that they had shared their friends’ embarrassing photos or videos on social media.

*“I used to post funny photos of my friend on social media, but I told her first...”* S.2

*“I used to take pictures of my friend sleeping in funny ways and post them on social media...”* S. 1

Additionally, some participants said that they used to block or exclude someone from group chats.

*“I used to unfriend or remove someone on Facebook because I could not put up with their bad behaviors.... I think it is common to do so...”* S. 5

Some participants said that they had been bullied in some ways on social media. Some participants revealed that they were mocked or made fun of for their English accents.

*“I used to be made fun of for my accent. I think they don’t like me, so they made fun of me..... and I also heard someone gossiping about my English accent, saying that they didn’t understand what I am talking...”* S.5

*“I had been made fun of for my accent and that made me lose my self-confidence...”*  
S. 4

Besides, some participants reported that their friends used to post their funny photos or videos on social media.

*“My friend used to take photos of me sleeping.... They painted my face with lipstick, but I was not angry at them... I think they were just having fun...it's so funny...”* S. 3

### 5.3 The factors contributing to cyberbullying perpetration and victimization among undergraduate English major students

In order to answer Research Question 2: 2. *What factors contribute to cyberbullying perpetration and victimization among undergraduate English major students?* The data collected from the closed-ended questionnaire and the semi-structured interview were analyzed. The findings are presented according to the following topics.

#### 5.3.1 Quantitative findings from the closed-ended questionnaire

Table 6 presents the factors that contribute to cyberbullying perpetration and victimization among undergraduate English major students.

**Table 6** The mean scores of factors contributing to cyberbullying perpetration and victimization among undergraduate English major students

Factors contributing to Cyberbullying	Male		Female		TOTAL				
	SD	Meaning	SD	Meaning	SD	Meaning			
1. Gender differences	3.80	1.16	Agree	4.32	1.11	Agree	4.06	1.14	Agree
2. Family background differences	2.00	1.43	Disagree	2.32	1.46	Disagree	2.16	1.45	Disagree
3. Social media addiction	3.41	1.33	Neutral	3.35	1.46	Neutral	3.38	1.40	Neutral
4. Anonymity in cyberspace	3.50	1.28	Agree	3.50	1.35	Agree	3.50	1.32	Agree
5. Insufficient cyberbullying laws	3.80	1.16	Agree	4.32	1.11	Agree	4.06	1.14	Agree
6. Degree of self-esteem	3.95	1.15	Agree	4.09	1.15	Agree	4.02	1.15	Agree

Table 6 illustrates that, on average, participants rated gender differences and inadequate cyberbullying laws as the primary factors for cyberbullying, with an average score of 4.06 (SD = 1.14). Conversely, family background differences had the lowest impact on cyberbullying, as indicated by a mean score of 2.16 (SD = 1.45).

Additionally, the data shows that male participants considered self-esteem to be the most crucial factor for cyberbullying ( $x = 3.95$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ), while family background differences were the least important ( $x = 2.00$ ,  $SD = 1.43$ ). Among female participants, both gender differences and inadequate cyberbullying laws were equally rated as the primary cyberbullying factors, with an average score of 4.32 (SD = 1.11). Similar to male participants, females also rated family background differences as having the lowest impact on cyberbullying ( $x = 2.32$ ,  $SD = 1.46$ ).

#### 5.3.2 Qualitative findings from the interview

The participants were asked about their opinions about the factors that contribute to cyberbullying, both in terms of perpetration and victimization. The results are classified according to the following topics.

### 5.3.2.1 Consequences of offline incidents

The participants indicated that the majority of cyberbullying perpetration and victimization stems from prior offline incidents. Both bullies and victims often harbor negative feelings towards each other in real life, and then use cyberspace as a means of retaliation.

*“So, when we were working on assignments together, I had some issues with some of my classmates. And then, she went and told other people in our LINE group about me, which made them feel negative towards me...”* S. 10

*“I used to snap pics of my friend snoozing in funny poses and share them on social media. I did it to get back at her because she had done the same to me...”* S. 1

*“...what happened was that I was really angry at someone for something she did to me, and I ended up posting something rude about her on Facebook. I just wanted to vent and tell other people about what had happened. I thought that posting it could help me calm down and feel better...”* S. 4

*“I used to be made fun of for my accent. I think they don't like me, so they made fun of me...”* S. 5

### 5.3.2.2 Gender differences

The participants thought that gender was the key factor causing cyberbullying perpetration and victimization. Most participants believed that females are more likely than males to engage in cyberbullying victimization. They also thought that LGBTQ community is more susceptible to bullying than cisgender males or females.

*“I think LGBTQ are the group of people that are made fun of the most.....”* S. 7

*“Well, in my opinion, women are more likely to be targets of cyberbullying compared to men. This might be because they use social media more often than men do, such as posting more pictures and stuff like that.”* S. 5

### 5.3.2.3 Anonymity of cyberspace

The participants believed that the anonymity of cyberspace encourages people to engage in cyberbullying. This anonymity allows individuals to express opinions about specific targets that they might not be able to do in real life.

*“I feel like sometimes we share our thoughts or comments about someone without really considering the consequences because we think that no one will know that it was us who said it. But if it were in real life, we might not say those things....”* S. 7

## 6. Discussion

In this study, the prevalence and causal factors of cyberbullying perpetration among undergraduate English major students were examined based on the quantitative and qualitative data collected from the close-ended questionnaire and the semi-structured interview. The quantitative findings from the questionnaire revealed that the majority of participants had never engaged in cyberbullying, either as a perpetrator or a victim. However, the qualitative findings indicated that some participants were unaware of their involvement in cyberbullying, and perceptions of cyberbullying varied among the participants. Types of cyberbullying reported included posting rude comments about someone, making fun of others, sharing embarrassing photos or videos, and exclusion from group chats. Factors contributing to cyberbullying were analyzed, with gender differences and inadequate cyberbullying laws rated as primary factors. Offline incidents, gender differences, and the anonymity of cyberspace were identified as influential factors in cyberbullying perpetration and victimization. The results are discussed as follows.

First, although the data from the close-ended questionnaire showed that a vast majority of the participants had never engaged in cyberbullying, either as a perpetrator or a victim, there were a number of participants involved in bullying on a social media platform. That is, about 10% of the participants admitted that they had bullied others online and about 8% reported that they had been bullied by others on social media sites. The findings of this study are in line with those from other previous studies, in which the researchers found a significant number of undergraduate students or youth were involved in cyberbullying behavior (Finn, 2004; Dilmac 2009; MacDonald and Roberts-Pittman, 2010; Pena, 2011; Zalaquett and Chatters, 2014; Chinpong, 2018; Vitto, 2018; Saengcharoensap and Rujiprak, 2021).

Second, the qualitative data from the interview revealed that there were a number of participants who were unaware that they had been involved in certain types of cyberbullying perpetration or victimization. This is due to the fact that most participants defined cyberbullying not only as an intentional act that caused serious harm or damage to someone's reputation but also as an act that was done by other people, not their close friends. As a result, they did not consider posting embarrassing photos or making fun of their friends' accents or appearances as cyberbullying perpetration. Instead, they viewed these actions as usual matters, joking around with their friends. This is confirmed by the qualitative data from the interview, which showed that the participants were not angry if they were made fun of by their close friends. Moreover, the action was viewed positively, as having fun with friends. On the contrary, if the same action was done by other people, it would be counted as cyberbullying, and that would pose negative effects on them, like making them feel sad or even lose their self-confidence. This finding aligns with previous studies examining Thai youth's perceptions of cyberbullying, including the work of Samoh et al (2019), which found that youth believed that cyberbullying had to cause actual harm or annoyance and be carried out with malicious intent. Furthermore, close friends were typically not regarded as cyber bullies.

Regarding the types of cyberbullying, the study found that the most frequent form of cyberbullying perpetration that the participants had been involved in was posting rude comments about someone online and spreading false information about them on social media. This finding aligns with earlier research (Garaigordobil, 2015; Zhu, 2021) indicating that verbal aggression is the most prevalent form of cyberbullying. One possible explanation for this pattern is that with the ability to remain anonymous online, the participants viewed posting rude comments as a

means of venting their frustration from in-person interactions since they were afraid of doing so in real life.

In addition to posting rude comments about someone, participants also reported instances of cyberbullying where others made fun of them. Through interviews, it was discovered that several participants shared their experiences of being targeted for cyberbullying due to their English accents. These incidents had a negative impact on their self-esteem and made them feel disliked by others. The reason why English accents were frequently targeted in cases of cyberbullying could be attributed to the fact that students learning a second language often aspire to acquire a native-sounding accent, as supported by various studies (Derwing, 2003; McCrocklin and Link, 2016). Consequently, accents become the primary aspect they prioritize when assessing the language proficiency of others. Likewise, studies on speaking anxiety (Price, 1991; Coppinger and Sheridan, 2022) revealed that ESL learners expressed concerns about their pronunciation and the fear of embarrassing themselves in social settings. It appears that this anxiety significantly contributes to the vulnerability of ESL learners to cyberbullying in this context.

Furthermore, it was found in the study that blocking or deleting someone from their online network was rated as the least prevalent cyberbullying behavior among the participants, according to the data from the close-ended questionnaire. However, in the interview, some participants admitted that they did so several times, which is in line with Saengcharoensap and Rujiprak (2021) who found that the majority of the cyberbullies had blocked or deleted one friend or more from their social networks. This might be because some participants believed that blocking or deleting someone from group chats or social media sites was not cyberbullying perpetration. They thought it was common to do so to protect themselves from any upset and even a way to prevent bullying.

Lastly, it was found in this study that gender differences played an important role in cyberbullying perpetration and victimization. Although the study found that the prevalence rates in cyberbullying perpetration between male and female participants were equal, female participants were more likely to be bullied online than their male counterparts. Similarly, the qualitative data show that most participants believed that were more vulnerable to cyberspace victimization compared to males. These findings are consistent with previous studies that have reported a higher prevalence of cyber-victimization among girls (Kawalski et al, 2012; DeHue et al, 2008; Hinduja and Patchin, 2015; Ybarra and Mitchell, 2004; Kwan and Skoric, 2013). Additionally, the study participants also believed that LGBTQ community was more susceptible to being targeted in cyberbullying, which is in line with the findings of Baumeister et al, 2016; Greytak et al, 2013; Mustanski et al, 2010; Rivers, 2011; and Sabella, 2013.

## **7. Conclusion**

This study shed light on the prevalence and causal factors of cyberbullying perpetration among undergraduate English major students using a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. The findings revealed that while a majority of participants had not engaged in cyberbullying, a notable percentage admitted to both perpetrating and experiencing cyberbullying on social media platforms. The qualitative data highlighted a lack of awareness among some participants regarding their involvement in certain types of cyberbullying, particularly when it was carried out by close friends. The most common form of cyberbullying perpetration reported by the participants was posting rude comments about someone online and

spreading false information about them on social media. Participants also shared experiences of cyberbullying related to English accents, indicating the impact of language proficiency and speaking anxiety. Blocking or deleting individuals from online networks was found to be less prevalent, with some participants perceiving it as a protective measure rather than cyberbullying perpetration. Gender differences also played a significant role in cyberbullying perpetration and victimization, with females being more likely to be bullied online and LGBTQ individuals being more susceptible to being targeted in cyberbullying. These findings contributed to the understanding of cyberbullying among English major students, as well as highlighted the importance of educating students about cyberbullying and its various forms and promoting healthy online behavior to mitigate the harmful effects of cyberbullying.

## 8. References

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